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# Trends in Singapore

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# Trends in Singapore

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Let me begin by giving a brief context to Singapore's higher education and research ecosystem. There are six universities in Singapore which are, in order of longevity, National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore Management University (SMU), Singapore University of Technology and Design, Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). National Institute of Education (NIE) is associated with NTU and is both an educational and research institution. Yale – NUS is a partnership between NUS and Yale universities.

There are a number of polytechnics which offer vocational training and education. National Library of Singapore is one of the major research libraries in Singapore. A\*Star, Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research and NRF, National Research Foundation are involved in scientific research, but also provide funding and support to other institutions for research.

Here are some highlights of both collaborative and institutional activities and trends amongst Singapore's academic libraries. For practical reasons, I will focus mainly on NUS, NTU, SMU and SUTD.

## **Collaborative activities amongst Singapore Academic and Research Libraries**

Librarians involved in information literacy (IL) from NUS, NTU and SMU Libraries meet regularly to discuss issues affecting information literacy, such as, the roles and responsibilities of Heads of Learning in up skilling Information Literacy librarians and the new ACRL framework and its implementation. One of the initiatives this group started was to have IL librarians from the three university libraries observe each library's IL programmes to learn from each other through observation and discussions. Librarians who attended each other's IL programmes shared their feedback and learnt from each other. An ACRL Information Literacy Immersion programme was organized by NUS in recent times and librarians from other universities were invited to participate and shared the cost.

A Day in the Life of..... is a staff development programme jointly organized amongst NUS, NTU, SMU, SUTD, SIM and NIE with the aim of exposing library staff who may not have experience in libraries other their own or may be new graduates to different libraries, colleagues and their ideas, approaches and practices. The programme is run twice a year with three hosts per run and one participant from each institution each time. It is a full day programme where the participants undertake the planning, coordination and organisation of the day at their own libraries. This programme has been running since 2013.

Singapore academic librarians have been collaborating to organise a number of international conferences over the years, for example IATUL 2012, IFLA Congress 2013 and the Joint Business Librarians conference 2016. Some of us will be hosting various satellite conferences prior to the 2018 IFLA Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## **Scholarly Communication**

NTU, NUS, SMU, NIE and A\*Star have all been managing their institutions' repositories of research publications for many years. NTU, SMU and A\*Star have had open access policies or mandates for some time. NTU Library has taken on a leadership role in supporting research data management activities at NTU. The Library has been providing training workshops for faculty and researchers in how to think about their data management needs. SMU Libraries has taken on the role of business owner for SMU's research publications database which is a module of IRIS (Integrated Research Information System). NTU, NUS, SMU and SUTD libraries have been collaboration partners with researchers and research units at their parent institutions in a range of research related initiatives. NTU, NUS and SMU have co-developed an online Research Data Management guide, adapted locally by each institution. Staff from NTU, NUS, SMU, SUTD and NIE who are involved and interested in research data management meet regularly to exchange information about what they are doing in their respective institutions.

## **Student, faculty, community engagement**

NTU Library Services have rolled out a compulsory Information Literacy for Undergraduates (ILUG) programme integrated into both the foundation and advanced modules across all Schools/Colleges.

All academic libraries in Singapore are involved in implementing a variety of information literacy programmes customized to the needs of specific groups of students, ranging from first year undergraduate to PhD students and faculty.

Singapore, being a highly connected and technologically advanced country, offers many opportunities for libraries to use a variety of technologies, apps and social media channels to engage students. There is a high level of laptop and smart phone ownership amongst Singapore students. Librarians have been experimenting with a variety of media and apps for service offerings, information literacy and communication with students and faculty.

Most academic and research libraries in Singapore offer short to medium term training or internship opportunities to librarians working in Asia Pacific and beyond as part of international collaboration efforts. Study visits to and from libraries in the ASEAN and APAC regions are not uncommon. In fact, librarians in developing countries in the region often come to Singapore to learn from Singapore's libraries and librarians.

## **Spaces, buildings, facilities and assessment**

After years of planning, SMU's Kwa Geok Choo Law Library named after the late Madam Kwa Geok Choo, a lawyer and wife of the late Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of Singapore and the mother of the current Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong was unveiled by the Prime Minister on March 15, 2017.

NUS, NTU and SMU Libraries have been repurposing and renovating library spaces and facilities on an on-going basis over the years. SUTD, having moved to their new library building recently has been enjoying an innovative library designed to exploit technology for service delivery and enhancement through interactive walls, writable surfaces.

At SMU, over 80% of library staff have been trained in Lean Six Sigma (Green Belt) to create and enhance culture of assessment and innovation amongst staff. 82% of NUS Librarians attended a certified service design thinking course which was focused on understanding, planning and implementing innovative services or products.

Most academic libraries in Singapore use a variety of client satisfaction surveys, benchmarking and assessment methods, such as LibQual, Insync, UX, data analysis, analytics and so on.

It is pleasing to see a steady increase of research papers, conference presentations and other types of publications produced by a growing number of Singapore librarians both in the local and regional fora, but also internationally, considering the size of Singapore. Singapore librarians attend many international conferences, undertake study tours, and participate in committees and working groups of many international professional organisations, such as IFLA, IATUL, PRRLA, LATIN, AUNILLO and so on.

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